

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV NIACT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT NIACT IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 072552

EXDIS, FOR AMBASSADOR PARKER AND CHARGE DUNNIGAN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:PFOR LE IS US

SUBJECT: EMBASSY TEL AVIV CONTACTS WITH LEBANESE

REF: USDAO TEL AVIV 0175 (DTG011131ZAPR)

1. FOR CHARGE DUNNIGAN: WOULD APPRECIATE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE A FULL DESCRIPTION OF HOW THE MEETING WITH THE CHRISTIAN MILITARY LEADER IN METULLA WAS ARRANGED (REFTEL). WHAT ROLE -- DIRECT OR INDIRECT -- DID THE ISRAELIS PLAY IN MAKING THIS ENCOUNTER POSSIBLE? WERE IDF REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT AT THE MEETING?
 2. YOU WILL APPRECIATE THAT EVEN A CHANCE MEETING BETWEEN EMBASSY REPRESENTATIVES AND LEBANESE MILITIA LEADER COULD LEAD TO MISUNDERSTANDINGS IN BEIRUT AND POSSIBLY DAMASCUS. YOU SHOULD TAKE STEPS TO ENSURE THAT THE DEPARTMENT IS
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- CONSULTED BEFOREHAND WHENEVER ANY POSSIBILITY AGAIN EMERGES THAT EMBASSY REPRESENTATIVES -- EVEN IN A CHANCE ENCOUNTER -- MIGHT TALK WITH LEBANESE IN ISRAEL WHO HAVE BEEN REJECTING THE AUTHORITY OF THE SARKIS GOVERNMENT.
3. FOR AMBASSADOR PARKER: AT YOUR DISCRETION YOU MAY WISH TO INFORM SARKIS OR BOUTROS THAT ONE OF OUR MILITARY

ATTACHES STATIONED IN TEL AVIV HAPPENED TO TALK TO A LEADER OF THE CHRISTIAN MILITIA ORGANIZATION OPERATING IN SOUTH LEBANON AND THAT THIS MEETING TOOK PLACE ON ISRAELI SOIL. YOU SHOULD EXPLAIN THAT, AS FAR AS WE ARE AWARE AND SUBJECT TO EMBASSY TEL AVIV'S COMMENTS, OUR ATTACHE WAS NOT REPEAT NOT UNDER INSTRUCTIONS TO GET IN TOUCH WITH ANY CHRISTIAN MILITARY LEADER AND THAT THE MEETING WAS ESSENTIALLY AN ACCIDENTAL ONE; WE WANT THE LEBANESE AUTHORITIES TO BE AWARE OF THIS MEETING. IT COULD BE MISINTERPRETED IN CERTAIN HOSTILE QUARTERS AS EVIDENCE THAT THE USG IS INVOLVED IN THE ACTIVITIES OF THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS IN SOUTHERN LEBANON. THIS IS UNTRUE.

4. MAKE CLEAR, IF YOU DECIDE TO INFORM THE LEBANESE LEADERS, THAT THE U.S. IS FOLLOWING A CONSISTENT POSITION OF SUPPORTING THE CENTRAL LEBANESE GOVERNMENT IN ITS STATED POLICIES. WE HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED BY THE DECISION OF THE SARKIS GOVERNMENT TO APPOINT A NEW COMMANDER FOR THE LEBANESE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT AND TO MOVE FORWARD IN RE-ESTABLISHING FORCES WHICH, WE HOPE, WILL HELP BRING THE SOUTH LEBANESE SITUATION UNDER CONTROL AND ASSERT THE AUTHORITY OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT THERE.

5. FOR AMBASSADOR MURPHY: YOU SHOULD NOT TAKE INITIATIVE TO INFORM SYRIANS BUT YOU MAY REPLY TO ANY HIGH-LEVEL SYRIAN INQUIRIES ABOUT THE MEETING ALONG THE LINES OF THE ABOVE GUIDANCE FOR AMBASSADOR PARKER.
CHRISTOPHER

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